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ABSTRACT

The importance to the black community of teaching as a profession can be seen in reference material and other literature about blacks, but this book is unique in presenting the voices of black teachers themselves. The stories of 20 black teachers, born between 1905 and 1973, are told in their own voices. These 20 life interviews collect the experiences of black teachers and document the constraints and supports in their professional lives, as well as how their experiences have changed over their careers and over the years. All interviews covered the social, economic, and cultural milieus of the teachers' families and communities, their schooling and teaching experiences, and other aspects of their personal and professional lives. Only five of the narrators are men, but this approximates the percentage of male black teachers listed in the 1990 census. Eleven of these teachers grew up in urban communities, and 13 of the 20 taught in cities. The perspectives of these educators show that many teachers considered their pupils apt and intelligent learners, that they were committed and related well to students, and that they did not always try to imbue their students with traits like tractability that so often characterized the teaching of white Northern school teachers. (SLD)

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